

DATES: Comments must be received in writing on or before September 14, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Written comments may be mailed to Richard R. Long, Director, Air Program, Mailcode 8P2-A, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region VIII, 999 18th Street, Suite 500, Denver, Colorado, 80202. Copies of the documents relevant to this action are available for public inspection during normal business hours at the Air Program, Environmental Protection Agency, Region VIII, 999 18th Street, Suite 500, Denver, Colorado, 80202. Copies of the State documents relevant to this action are available for public inspection at the Utah Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Air Quality, 150 North 1950 West, Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-4820.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Cindy Rosenberg, EPA, Region VIII, (303) 312-6436.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: See the information provided in the Direct Final action of the same title which is located in the Rules and Regulations Section of this **Federal Register**.

Authority: 42 U.S.C. 7401 *et seq.*

Dated: July 30, 1998.

Patricia D. Hull,

Acting Regional Administrator, Region VIII.
[FR Doc. 98-21749 Filed 8-13-98; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Health Care Financing Administration

42 CFR Parts 416 and 488

[HCFA-1885-N]

RIN 0938-AH81

Medicare Program; Update of Ratesetting Methodology, Payment Rates, Payment Policies, and the List of Covered Procedures for Ambulatory Surgical Centers Effective October 1, 1998; Extension of Comment Period

AGENCY: Health Care Financing Administration (HCFA), HHS.

ACTION: Notice of extension of comment period for proposed rule.

SUMMARY: This notice extends the comment period for a proposed rule published in the **Federal Register** on June 12, 1998 (63 FR 32290). In that rule we proposed to:

- Update the criteria for determining which surgical procedures can be

appropriately and safely performed in an ambulatory surgical center (ASC);

- Make additions to and deletions from the current list of Medicare covered ASC procedures based on the revised criteria;
- Rebase the ASC payment rates using cost, charge, and utilization data collected by a 1994 survey of ASCs;
- Refine the ratesetting methodology that was implemented by a final notice published on February 8, 1990 in the **Federal Register**;
- Require that ASC payment, coverage, and wage index updates be implemented annually on January 1 rather than having these updates occur randomly throughout the year;
- Reduce regulatory burden; and
- Make several technical policy changes.

This proposed rule implements requirements of section 1833(i) (1) and (2) of the Social Security Act. The comment period is extended for 30 days.

DATES: The comment period is extended to 5 p.m. on September 10, 1998.

ADDRESSES: Mail written comments (one original and three copies) to the following address: Health Care Financing Administration, Department of Health and Human Services, Attention: HCFA-1885-P, P.O. Box 26688, Baltimore, MD 21207-5178.

If you prefer, you may deliver your written comments (one original and three copies) to one of the following addresses: Room 309-G, Hubert H. Humphrey Building, 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20201, or Room C5-09-26, Central Building, 7500 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21244-1850.

Because of staffing and resource limitations, we cannot accept comments by facsimile (FAX) transmission. In commenting, please refer to file code HCFA-1885-P. Comments received timely will be available for public inspection as they are received, generally beginning approximately 3 weeks after publication of a document, in Room 309-G of the Department's offices at 200 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC, on Monday through Friday of each week from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. (phone: (202) 690-7890).

For comments that relate to information collection requirements, mail a copy of comments to: Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, Office of Management and Budget, Room 10235, New Executive Office Building, Washington, DC 20503, Attn: Allison Herron Eydt, HCFA Desk Officer.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Joan H. Sanow, (410) 786-5723.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

On June 12, 1998, we issued a proposed rule in the **Federal Register** (63 FR 32290) that would:

- Update the criteria for determining which surgical procedures can be appropriately and safely performed in an ambulatory surgical center (ASC);
- Make additions to and deletions from the current list of Medicare covered ASC procedures based on the revised criteria;
- Rebase the ASC payment rates using cost, charge, and utilization data collected by a 1994 survey of ASCs;
- Refine the ratesetting methodology that was implemented by a final notice published on February 8, 1990 in the **Federal Register**;
- Require that ASC payment, coverage, and wage index updates be implemented annually on January 1, rather than having these updates occur randomly throughout the year;
- Reduce regulatory burden; and
- Make several technical policy changes.

The proposed rule would also implement requirements of section 1833(i)(1) and (2) of the Social Security Act. We indicated that comments would be considered if we received them by August 11, 1998.

Because of the complexity and scope of the proposed rule and because numerous members of the industry and professional associations have requested more time to analyze the potential consequences of the rule, we have decided to extend the comment period for an additional 30 days. This document announces the extension of the public comment period to September 10, 1998.

Authority: Secs. 1102 and 1871 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1302 and 1395hh).

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program No. 93.773, Medicare—Hospital Insurance; Program No. 93.774, Medicare—Supplementary Medical Insurance Program)

Dated: August 10, 1998.

Nancy-Ann Min DeParle,

Administrator, Health Care Financing Administration.

Dated: August 10, 1998.

Donna E. Shalala,

Secretary.

[FR Doc. 98-21883 Filed 8-11-98; 2:42 pm]

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